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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE  
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## THE COMMUNIST OFFER TO EXCHANGE PRISONERS IN KOREA

The Communist offer to exchange sick and wounded POWs in Korea probably represents an attempt to regain the propaganda initiative, not only on an issue of wide humanitarian appeal, but on the whole East-West controversy of which Korea is the focus. The move is consonant with the recently intensified effort to portray the Soviet side as the "camp of peace."

The Communists' statement emphasized their desire for an agreement in accordance with Article 109 of the Geneva Convention, which specifically provides that no sick or injured prisoner-of-war "may be repatriated against his will during hostilities." Thus, while the Communists could negate the offer by attaching unacceptable stipulations, they could, in the interest of their broad propaganda objectives, agree on a partial exchange of sick and wounded prisoners without compromising their stand on "total repatriation." They could continue to interpret Article 118 as calling for repatriation of all prisoners following the cessation of hostilities.

The Communist negotiators at Panmunjom have always stood firm on their demands for "total repatriation," and accepted the indefinite suspension of the talks on 8 October rather than accept various alternatives offered by the UN. Moscow's violent rejection of the Indian proposal underscored its unwillingness to compromise on this issue, and recent Communist propaganda has given no indication that they would be willing to accept a truce on anything but their own terms.

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